

PNEUMONIA IN OLD AGE ¹

(Abstract)

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The dictum that the young get well and the old must die, must be constantly kept in mind and heeded in the treatment of pneumonia of old age.

If treatment is helpful in turning the tide favorably in pneumonia of the early and middle life, it should be so in old age. Assiduous care and close attention are imperative. Frequent visits by the physician are necessary. The patient should be examined often, but without being unduly subjected to exertion or discomfort.

The death rate from pneumonia per 100,000 of the population was 68 between the ages of 45 and 54, 145 between 55 and 64, 234 between 65 and 74, and 441 among people 75 years and over.

The field of usefulness of serum treatment in pneumonia of the aged is greatly limited, as their type of disease is not generally lobar. It is in lobar pneumonia that serums have been used with best results. Alcohol is useful in certain cases.

Given one remedy with which to treat pneumonia in the aged, I would select oxygen. If there was a positive blood culture I would ask for serum and oxygen. If neither were obtainable, I would use digitalis. As all are to be had, I would meet the clinical indications.